

165 years of the arrival of the Hungarian emigrants in Shumen and 65 years of the founding of the Lajos Kossuth House Museum were officially commemorated over a whole week at the end of November 2014. The commemorations began on November 17th with a two-day special featuring of Hungarian films, and continued on November 19th and 20th with free admission of all visitors to the museum named after the legendary Hungarian revolutionary. The culmination of the events was held on November 21st, again kindly hosted by the Lajos Kossuth House Museum. From the very moment of crossing its threshold, its visitors and guests were astonished by the recreation of a vivid scene representing the welcoming of the Hungarian emigrants 165 years ago. The historical moment was recreated by the members of the Krum Strashniy Patriotic Group at the Military Club in the town of Shumen. The other surprises at the celebration included a recreation of a social evening of 19th century Shumla (the name of the town at that time), presented against the musical background of operettas, csárdás, polkas and mazurkas, performed by a violin trio of the Shumen symphony orchestra. This was followed by a concert of the Little Serenade Formation at the Dobri Voynikov Community Centre in the town of Shumen, as well as by an exhibition of posters of old Hungarian movies.

The event was attended by an official delegation consisting of: His Excellency András Klein, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Hungary to Bulgaria, Prof. László Csorba, PhD, Director of the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, Prof. Sándor Kiss, PhD of the Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Prof. András Balogh, PhD of the Eötvös Loránd

University, Tosho Donchev, PhD, Director of the Hungarian Cultural Institute in Sofia, Mr. Krasimir Kostov – Mayor of the Municipality of Shumen, and Mr. Petko Sharenkov, Governor of the town.

Margarita Stiliyanova, who has been the curator of the museum for many years, greeted the official delegation and the other guests with a short story about the great deed of Lajos Kossuth and about the role of the Kossuth emigrants in Shumen. In his speech after that, the Hungarian Ambassador once again pointed out that “Shumen is the Hungarian capital in Bulgaria”.

The Lajos Kossuth House Museum is an architectural monument of the Bulgarian national revival of the thirties of the 19th century. Its interior is representative of a wealthy home of the Bulgarian national revival period, whose owner was the Shumen tradesman and mayor of the Bulgarian municipality, Dimitraki Hadzhipanev. After the suppression of the Hungarian revolution in 1849, during his exile in Shumla, there for several months lived its ideologist and leader Lajos Kossuth. The museum has a permanent documentary exhibition covering the course of the revolution; personal belongings and letters of Kossuth in the modernised memorial part of the house, opened with the collaboration of specialists of the National Museum in Budapest, as well as a travelling photo exhibition of the Hungarian Cultural Institute whose author is János Eifert. The guests of the commemoration of the 165th anniversary of the arrival of the Hungarian emigrants in Shumen and the 65th anniversary of the founding of the Lajos Kossuth House Museum in Shumen were impressed by another novelty in the museum – the silicone figures of the Hungarian ideologist and revolutionary, and

of the owners of the house – Dimitraki and Elenka Hadzhipanevi, sculptured in full length by the local artist Behchet Danadzha.

The week dedicated to the Hungarian culture in Shumen will leave a long-lasting memory in the minds of the residents and guests of the town. And in my mind echo the words of Lóránt Hegedüs, the author of one of the biographies, dedicated to Lajos Kossuth: “If you ever happen to find yourself travelling in Bulgaria, go and look for this mysterious house”.